

22. (Unamended) A method for manufacturing the image-forming apparatus according to Claim 20, further comprising a getter flash step of activating an evaporable getter after the baking step.

*Claim*  
23. (Unamended) A method for manufacturing the image-forming apparatus according to Claim 22, further comprising the step of degassing the evaporable getter by heating the evaporable getter prior to the getter flash step.

24. (Unamended) A method for manufacturing the image-forming apparatus according to Claim 23, wherein the degassing step is executed prior to the baking step.

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REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 13 being independent. Claims 3 and 15 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Independent Claims 1 and 13 have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

Initially, Applicants are resubmitting an English translation of Japanese Document No. 7-296731 for consideration by the Examiner. It is believed that the translation was included with the Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement of June 27, 2000. Due to an oversight, however, this document was not identified on the Disclosure Citation form (PTO-1449) that accompanied that Information Disclosure Statement. A Disclosure Citation form listing the enclosed translation is being submitted herewith. The Examiner is respectfully

requested to initial and return the citation form to indicate consideration of the enclosed translation.

It is believed that there are no fees necessary in connection with the enclosed translation. However, any fees deemed to be necessary may be deducted from Deposit Account No. 06-1205.

Claims 1-8, 10-20 and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Mitzutake '538 in view of Kato '708 and Dynka '825. In addition, Claims 9 and 21 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over these citations and further in view of Wallace '563. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, and includes the steps of fabricating an airtight vessel connected to an evacuation tube, evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube while simultaneously baking the entire airtight vessel, and activating a getter disposed in the airtight vessel. In addition, after activating the getter and during the evacuating step, the evacuation tube is sealed by heating the evacuation tube.

Claim 13 relates to a method for manufacturing an image forming apparatus using an airtight vessel containing a plurality of electron emitting devices and image-forming members, and includes the same steps as in Claim 1.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, the entire vessel is baked at the same time that evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube and

sealing the evacuation tube occurs. In this manner, an airtight vessel providing superior performance and a long life can be provided.

The primary citation to Mitsutake relates to an electron beam apparatus and an image forming apparatus that includes an airtight envelope. An exhaust pipe of the envelope is connected to a vacuum pump and used to evacuate the envelope. The Office Action relies on Mitsutake for the teaching of activating a getter immediately before sealing the exhaust tube or, alternatively, activating a getter immediately after sealing the exhaust tube.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Mitsutake does not teach or suggest, inter alia, baking the entire airtight vessel and at the same time evacuating the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube and heating and sealing the evacuation tube.

The secondary citation to Kato relates to an electron-emitting device and was cited for its teaching of activating a getter prior to sealing the exhaust tube.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that Kato fails to compensate for the deficiencies in Mitsutake as discussed above, namely baking the entire airtight vessel and at the same time evacuating the inside through the evacuation tube and heating and sealing the evacuation tube. Moreover, Kato fails to even disclose an evacuation tube, as acknowledged in paragraph 4 (page 5) of the Office Action.

Dynka is directed to a method for evacuating and sealing a display envelope and was cited for its teaching of an extended bake-out process and a nonevaporable getter.

Similarly to Kato, the method in Dynka provides a vacuum envelope without using an evacuation tube. Dynka also fails to teach or suggest baking the entire sealed envelope and at the same time evacuating the inside of the envelope through an evacuation tube and heating and sealing the evacuation tube, as in the above citations.

Therefore, without conceding the propriety of combining Mitsutake, Kato and Dynka in the manner proposed in the Office Action, such a combination still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-8, 10-20 and 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

The tertiary citation to Wallace relates to a method of making a field-emission device and was cited for its teaching of providing means for reactivating a nonevaporable getter.

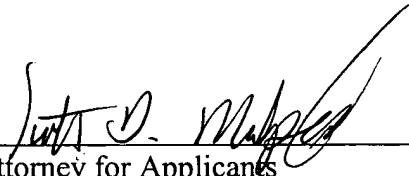
Wallace fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in the citations as discussed above with respect to Applicants' independent claims. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 9 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is also respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1 and 13 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 2-12 and 14-24 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C.  
office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our  
below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1. (Three Times Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, comprising the steps of:
  - a) fabricating an airtight vessel connected to an evacuation tube;
  - b) evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube while simultaneously baking the entire airtight vessel,
  - c) activating a getter disposed in the airtight vessel [prior to sealing the vessel]; and
  - d) after activation of the getter and during the evacuating step, sealing the evacuation tube by heating the evacuation tube [initiating a baking step to seal the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel].
3. Cancelled.
4. (Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel according to Claim [3] 2, wherein the evacuation step is executed simultaneously with at least one of the getter activation step, the heating step and the baking step.
6. (Amended) A method for manufacturing an airtight vessel according to Claim [3] 2, wherein the evacuation step is executed prior to the getter activation step.

13. (Three Times Amended) A method for manufacturing an image-forming apparatus using an airtight vessel containing a plurality of electron emission elements and image-forming members comprising the steps of:

- a) fabricating an airtight vessel connected to an evacuation tube;
- b) evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube while simultaneously baking the entire airtight vessel,
- c) activating a getter disposed in [a] the airtight vessel [prior to sealing the vessel]; and
- d) after activation of the getter and during the evacuating step, sealing the evacuation tube by heating the evacuation tube [initiating a baking step to seal the vessel by fusing a part of an evacuation tube for evacuating the inside of the vessel while heating the vessel].

15. Cancelled.

16. (Amended) A method for manufacturing the image-forming apparatus according to Claim [15] 14, wherein the evacuation step is executed simultaneously with at least one of the getter activation step, the heating step and the baking step.